

## DEPUTY LEADER AND CABINET MEMBER FOR URBAN REGENERATION – COUNCILLOR JACKSON

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### **Sea Water Quality**

This year will see the introduction of the Revised Bathing Water Directive with much more stringent standards. Blackpool Council continues its partnership working across the Fylde Peninsula with Wyre, Fylde and Lancashire County Council along with United Utilities and the Environment Agency to ensure that all possible action is taken to react to these increased standards.

In addition, the regional Turning tides Partnership are working together with the 'Love my Beach' campaign to ensure awareness is raised across the region and that we work together to ensure we have the best possible bathing waters.

Work is progressing in partnership with United Utilities for their works in Anchorsholme Park. United Utilities have recently received their determination of funded schemes from Ofwat (the Water Services Regulatory Authority) and we now understand that the schemes, presented to improve bathing water, have been accepted.

### **Flood and Water Management Statutory Services**

The Regional Flood and Coastal Committee Chairman recently attended the Lancashire Strategic Partnership for flood risk and were extremely complimentary about the work being done by Blackpool, Lancashire and Blackburn and the Environment Agency and United Utilities. The Partnership will continue to build on its successes for bids such as the recently successful Anchorsholme, Rossall and Marton Mere coastal projects to ensure that all flood risk is minimised.

### **Fylde Peninsula Water Management Partnership**

The Partnership is awaiting the results and proposals from Defra on the consultation on the Sustainable Urban Drainage role. In the meantime, the Partnership continues to develop its strategies for ensuring all developments consider its drainage proposals ensuring they address the need for sustainable drainage.

Blackpool will be host to two major conferences in 2015. The Local Government Association Coastal Special Interest Group will host their Annual General Meeting in Blackpool in July 2015. This will involve representatives of all Coastal Towns in England visiting Blackpool to look at the Coastal investment and its associated economic benefits. In addition, the Environment Agency Coastal Practitioners workshop is being held at the Imperial in Blackpool in April 2015. As a result of the Best practice recognised by the Environment Agency, they have asked for a representative of the Fylde Peninsula Partnership to speak at this workshop. This is a National event for the Environment Agency

### **Getting People into Work**

#### Mental Health Pilot Scheme

Blackpool is one of four areas in England set to benefit from a new Government pilot designed to help people with mental health conditions return to work. Many existing employment initiatives perform poorly in addressing the needs of job seekers with such conditions as depression and anxiety, especially those in receipt of Employment Support Allowance where the government estimate 46% have some form of debilitating mental health condition.

The pilot aims to test a more integrated approach to supporting unemployed residents affected by common mental health conditions. A new team of employment and health professionals will be formed to speed up access to a range of talking therapies, work readiness and in-work support, aiming to assist around 1,000 residents to improve their mental well-being and back to work focus. Blackpool is to receive £1.1m from Department for Communities and Local Government's (DCLG) Transformation Challenge Award fund towards a £2.2m project, with the balance to be met via the European Social Fund.

The pilot, which will run for two years from April 2015, will be project managed and co-delivered by Blackpool Council (led by Positive Steps into Work) and NHS Blackpool Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) and supported by Jobcentre Plus and the Lancashire Enterprise Partnership. The programme is entirely voluntary.

#### Tangerine Confectionery

Positive Steps into Work is coordinating support for 111 Tangerine Confectionery staff facing redundancy by the end of March 2015 due to the closure of the Clifton Road site.

A range of key support services are assisting including Jobcentre Plus, the National Careers Service, the Money Advice Service, Get Started and a number of local training providers to help staff in the difficult transition to alternate employment.

At the end of November, the team delivered four group information sessions to 77 staff and worked with the company to undertake a complete survey of needs. The results have informed a 'market place' event that took place in early January where staff were able to meet all the agencies involved and arrange appointments for ongoing support.

An additional 35 jobs have already been safeguarded by the Council's financial intervention, relocating two production lines to Vicarage Lane plant by the end of February 2015.

### **Planning and Land Use**

#### The Blackpool Local Plan Part 1: Core Strategy

The Core Strategy Proposed Submission document (June 2014) with the Sustainability Appraisal and Habitat Regulations Assessment and other supporting evidence base documents was submitted to the Secretary of State for Examination on 19 December 2014. A Planning Inspector will be assigned who will review the submitted plan and supporting documents in January and decide whether the plan can proceed to examination. If we are able to proceed, the Planning Inspectorate will agree dates for the Examination with the Council, which is likely to be around March 2015.

#### Joint Lancashire Minerals and Waste Local Plan

As a minerals and waste authority, Blackpool works jointly with Lancashire County Council (LCC) and Blackburn-with-Darwen Council on the Joint Lancashire Minerals and Waste Local Plan.

The joint authorities have agreed to review the Minerals and Waste Local Plan to extend the plan period to 2032 (15 years from the anticipated date of adoption). The current plan only covers the period to 2021. A scoping consultation inviting comments on what the review of the local plan should contain took place between 7 November and 19 December 2014.

A Chief Officer meeting will take place in January 2015 to discuss the outcome of the scoping consultation and the reports that will be presented to the Joint Advisory Committee (JAC). These reports will inform members of the responses received to the scoping consultation and how the comments have informed the next draft of the Plan. It is expected that the next stage of consultation

on the draft Plan will take place around June 2015 following individual approval of the consultation draft by the three authorities.

#### Onshore Oil and Gas Supplementary Planning Document (SPD)

Blackpool Council is working jointly with Lancashire County Council and Blackburn-with-Darwen Council in preparing an SPD on Onshore Oil and Gas Exploration, Production and Distribution. The SPD will provide clarity as to the information required accompanying planning applications, how to present the application so that those consulted can have confidence in the process and the main issues and considerations necessary to satisfy the policy tests contained in the local plan.

In June and July 2014, the councils consulted on what the SPD should contain. Feedback received from a number of key stakeholders has been taken into account and a draft consultation document has now been produced which will be consulted upon during January and February 2015. The draft Consultation SPD includes:

- An introduction to the planning system and process and the division of responsibilities within the wider regulatory process.
- An introduction to oil and gas processes and links to relevant other sources of information.
- An illustration of the licenced oil and gas areas.
- A summary of the development plan and the most relevant planning policies.
- A description of the main phases of development and the main planning considerations associated with them.
- A description of the principal issues associated with oil and gas proposals, the land use planning objectives that are relevant and the necessary supporting information.

The Joint Advisory Committee for Strategic Planning representing the three authorities will consider a report on the result of the consultation before the relevant Executive Member at each authority makes a decision on whether to adopt the document.

### **Economic Development**

#### Get Started

The Get Started service continues to be in high demand by Blackpool residents. Between April and November 2014, 240 residents benefited from various workshops and one-to-one advice, resulting in 63 new businesses being formed. In the same period, £247,000 of start-up finance has been secured to assist these businesses, bringing the total start up finance secured since 2012/ 2013 to £635,000. Get Started remains on target to assist 90 new business starts in 2014/ 2015. A diverse mix of new businesses has been formed ranging from a florist, an e-commerce business to a learning assessment consultant.

Get Started will be supporting a new Blackpool youth enterprise initiative to be launched in January 2015. The Young Enterprise Solutions (YES) project, co-ordinated by One Blackpool, has received £50,000 sponsorship from the Royal Bank of Scotland. The project will work with unemployed young people aged 16 - 24 in Blackpool to promote enterprise and social enterprise as a viable career pathway. Get Started will work closely with YES, ensuring maximum benefit from this new money coming into Blackpool. YES will offer one-to-one business mentoring, facilitated peer support, on-line learning and interactive workshops. Get Started will supplement this offer by delivering additional workshops, access to our Small Business Advisors and a dedicated YES room at Blackpool Enterprise Centre. The YES room will offer a free professional office environment for research and business planning with access to Wi-Fi and onsite business advice and online toolkits via Blackpool Unlimited (the Council's business communications portal). YES is aiming to engage 130 young people in the interactive training programme and 52 of these will go on to the one-to-one support.

### Blackpool Tourism Academy

Blackpool Council is supporting the programme of skills activity emanating from the Blackpool Tourism Academy (BTA), which has been established by a consortium of leading tourism businesses with a vision to increase the vocational skillset of the resort's workforce. One of the key objectives of the BTA is for Blackpool to become the first UK seaside resort to achieve WorldHost status, an international standard of customer excellence. Some 2,500 people need to be trained to unlock this status for the resort. WorldHost training has been used to train over one million people worldwide including tens of thousands of volunteers and staff at the London 2012 Olympic Games and Paralympics, widely praised for the fantastic welcome they gave to visitors. The BTA employers have already committed training almost 1000 of their staff in this financial year and other smaller tourism businesses are starting to take up this offer too. It is hoped destination status can be achieved by the end of 2015. Businesses need to train 50% of their front line staff to become a WorldHost recognised as an individual business and the Sandcastle Waterpark is the first Blackpool tourism business to achieve this status.

### **Youth Employment**

The proportion of 16 to 18 year olds Not in Education, Employment or Training (NEET) at the end of October 2014 was 5.7% compared with 6.2% in October 2013. This represents 297 young people who were NEET, the lowest it has been at this time of year. Overall NEET has fallen by 18.3% between October 2012 and October 2014.

Youth Enterprise Challenge for Blackpool and Fylde College Students has been launched. Mike Taplin, Senior Manager (Post 16 Learning) brought new partners together with Blackpool and Fylde College and Brian House to launch this year's challenge. Students will be tasked to raise money for Brian House through an enterprise activity, but this year students will have access to a business mentor through the 3E Partnership and training from Think Forward. An evaluation framework has also been put in place to provide evidence based practice for future funding opportunities to help roll out this model across Blackpool.

Connexions are currently involved in running a project in the Claremont Ward specifically to engage NEET 16 to 18 year olds. Claremont was chosen as it has a high concentration of NEET and it also links in with the Selective Licensing/ Transient Team. Through linking with other organisations in Claremont more intensively, Connexions will be able to target young people that would otherwise most likely not access our service. This will also allow the service to assess and understand the barriers and needs of young people that are not accessing appropriate provision. It will also allow the service to assess and evaluate other services to allow for better joined up working. The project will run until March 2015.

### **Phones and IT**

#### Windows 7 Upgrades and device Deployment

The IT Service is continuing with the refresh of Windows software and hardware devices. This is necessary due to the withdrawal of Windows XP and the age of many hardware devices significantly exceeding their serviceable lifespan.

In the November and December 2014, a further 213 devices were rolled out taking the total number of devices upgraded since the programme started to 1853. The new devices will enable faster access times, improved productivity and flexible working.

#### Printing Upgrades

Roll out of new printing facilities to areas of the Council that have been upgraded to Windows 7 continues. We have now completed around 60% of the print device refresh.

### Joint working with NHS

- Provision of Wi-Fi facilities for access by Council staff at Blackpool Victoria Hospital and Clifton Hospital to support flexible working.

The launch of Go ON Blackpool was held on the 11 December 2014 at the Winter Gardens. Go ON is a national charity that is committed to increasing the digital skills of individuals and businesses to improve the UK's standing as a digitally included nation and we have committed to getting colleagues, communities and customers online as part of their Digital Skills Pledge. There were a range of partners represented, including Libraries, Argos and Disability First and residents were invited to see what they had to offer in terms of digital services. Of those that visited 47% expressed an interest in training and 37 % offered their skills as digital champions.

Alongside this ran a more formal event with presentations from a range of organisations, which included the opportunity for representatives to complete a pledge to increase digital skills amongst their clients.

### **Schools IT SLA**

Large amounts of work have been undertaken supporting the 'new' ICT curriculum. This support has been in different formats, half day INSET, Staff meetings and individual meetings with heads and subject/ ICT leads. More INSET on new curriculum in diary for the early part of the New Year:

- Additional support providing professional development to teaching staff familiarising them with new software to support the Programming element of the new curriculum planned for the New Year.
- Undertaken E-safety work on a number of levels. These include policy support and development, parent awareness sessions, targeted KS2 pupil and staff awareness raising sessions in readiness for new 'Gadgets' and online access as a result of Christmas. Planned E-safety updates and awareness sessions for all school staff in January.
- Code Club information circulated to all schools, encouraging school staff to get involved with coding.